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CHAPTER VI

ORIGIN MYTHS

Introduction----Bella Coola Origin Myths----Origin Myths of Other Tribes----Early Traditions have the Ceremonial Significance of Origin Myths----Sisaok Origin Myths.

Introduction

Examples will be given here of the origin myths, which are believed to authorize so much of the ritual already described, and to which repeated reference has been made. In 1898 Professor Boas published such an admirable collection of traditions of this type[1] that the present writer paid little attention to the subject. The Bella Coola, however, are so intensely proud of the deeds of their first forefathers that several insisted on recounting them before they were willing to do other work; in consequence, a fair number of myths were collected through necessity. Since tales of this type were recounted almost entirely at potlatches, ~~and less attention has been paid to them~~ their significance has declined since the prohibition of this rite. Consequently, many legends are only remembered in part; the abbreviated and often pointless series of anecdotes here recorded can be no more than a small part of the rich field which must once have existed among the Bella Coola.

As Professor Boas has clearly shown, origin myths

1. p. 50 sq.

foot note for p. 329

2. In writing up this field material, it was my original intention to place all legends together in a separate section, or appendix, following a common anthropological practice. This, however, would have been contrary to Bella Coola thought since origin myths, for example, are regarded as entirely different from either mere stories, or from incidents connected with shamans, - to name two other groups of what are usually described as "legends". I recognize that the insertion of this chapter of origin myths interrupts the sequence of presenting Bella Coola culture, but I believe that it is the way which the Bella Coola themselves would regard as logical, and that it brings out the essential interactions of this type of myth upon their whole life.

of time, the supreme god sent down to earth the first ancestors of the Bella Coola people, ~~each~~ each usually provided with ~~xxx~~ a house, and certain supernatural powers. means of sustenance, The right to ~~use~~ the names of these people, as well as to ~~use~~ the type of ceremonial objects used by them, has been the privilege of their descendants. But these early Bella Coola, like their modern descendants, had ~~xxxx~~ several ~~names~~ designations, each carrying with it a definite prerogative. Thus in a single myth there may be embodied a dozen or more names and incidents which are quoted at the present day to authorize such different ~~types of~~ phases of culture as dances, rights to hunting-grounds, professions, or ~~other phases of Bella Coola activity~~ names of clogs?. It has accordingly been impossible to avoid mention of the origin of many kusiut dances, which will be described in a later chapter. ~~It will suffice to say that each of these is a dramatic representation of the action of some supernatural being; in which the performer may be a "Cannibal", a "Breaker", or ~~xxxxxxxx~~ one of many other kusiut rites.~~ hence a performance, dances. Any myth which gives the origin of a name, a dance, or any other prerogative, is termed a smaiusta. Each of these is, or was in the old days, remembered with great care and never recounted in full detail except to the members of the ancestral family whose names are embodied in it. Even at potlatches the full details of the myth are not laid bare. Indeed, if it is thought that a young man is of a flighty, garrulous disposition, unlikely to preserve the dignity of his ancestral fame, the details are concealed ~~even~~ from him. Even at the present time there is much ~~hard feeling if any one should dare to~~ unauthorized use of a smaiusta, ~~to which he is not entitled~~, and in the old days ~~such~~ this would inevitably have led to bloodshed. Boas (1) states that the terms smaiusta and semsma are synonymous. resentment at any

no space

(1), Page 116.

The writer feels certain that this is an error. He discussed the matter repeatedly with various Bella Coola, all of whom agreed ~~who were consistent in saying~~ that a s<u>e</u>msma is a mere story ~~such as~~ which can be told by anyone, whereas a smaiusta is a myth ~~authorizing prerogatives of some kind, and as such is the~~ possessed by the individual, or individuals, whose prerogatives are derived from it. To the Bella Coola the two are ~~radi-~~ utterly different.

None the less, there is no doubt that records of the past change from one category to the other. A wealthy chief, eager to give a potlatch, but lacking the mythical authorization, must frequently have used a s<u>e</u>msma, ~~and~~ claiming the hero as an ancestor. Unquestionably there would be veiled amusement at him for doing so, but the individual prestige of one who can give potlatches is so great that in time his claim would probably be accepted. The two versions of the myth given on pages is a case in point. The first ~~version~~ was told as a smaiusta by the ~~from~~ a woman who claimed to be a descendant of the people figuring in it; ~~A~~ second, ~~version was received~~ as a s<u>e</u>msma story, from a second man. In view of the reliability of both informants, it seems highly probable that this is a ~~case of a~~ story, ~~which is~~ partially converted to a myth. In other examples there appear incidents resembling the supernatural tales given on pages , and here too it appears probable that s<u>e</u>msma have been assimilated into smaiusta. It is complimentary to the truthfulness of the Bella Coola, and to the respect they show ~~for the property to myths which belong to others~~ for intangible property, that the writer received no stories which he has reason to believe are smaiusta owned by ~~belonging~~ to others. Repeatedly an informant would say that he knew ~~a~~ one, ~~smaiusta~~, but would not tell it since it belonged to some other family.

After collecting a few myths, in each of which it was stated that the first settlers at village X. were A., B., and C., with their sisters, P. and Q., the writer was led to believe that it would have been possible, ~~or would have been~~ before the culture of the Bella Coola had fallen into its present decay, to make a census of those whom the Indians believe to have been the first settlers of this earth, and that such a ~~census~~ list would have had few contradictions. ~~It was soon found that this would not be possible.~~ This was soon found to be false. Two myths frequently give different people as the first occupants of a certain village, nor does such contradiction trouble the Bella Coola. Each man, convinced of the authenticity of his own family account, is quite willing to believe that

the ~~myth~~ one belonging to someone else is likewise correct. ~~its contradiction to his~~ This characteristic lack of logical consistency has already been ~~often~~ mentioned in other connections. ~~own is a matter of no consequence.~~ ~~This attitude xixk of universal belief is one of the strongest characteristics of the Bella Coola.~~ Boas (1) likewise ~~found~~ gives an instance ~~in which there was~~ of uncertainty as to the first occupants of a village, though, on the whole, he found ~~the system of~~ Bella Coola myths ~~more~~ clogged to be more codified than the present writer has done. In view of their lack of systematization in other matters, it would have been surprising if the Bella Coola had evolved a ~~xxxxixxx~~ census, agreeable in details to all, of their first ancestors.

Another matter to be considered at this point, is the similarity of detail in many myths. In part this can be explained by the assumption that ~~simsma~~ have been elevated into ~~myths~~ smaiusta; in ~~which~~ this case it would not be impossible ~~xx~~ for the same story to have been ~~so elevated~~ used by two, ~~different~~ or more families. A more common explanation ~~must have been~~ is the splitting of myths. Although, theoretically, ~~a myth~~ one can never be altered, and portions in the possession of other individuals are remembered as such, there must have been many cases in which the owner of a section ~~of a myth~~ told the whole ~~of it~~ as his own property. This would ~~xx~~ not be difficult in cases where he moved away from the other members of his family. In course of time, with the assimilation of elements in themselves not strictly mythological, two myths would evolve having a few incidents in common. If asked concerning this, the Bella Coola ~~would answer~~ explain that the first people were quite as capable of doing the same things as two modern men. The occurrence of the same name, or names, in different myths does not, according to the Bella Coola, prove a connection between them, since many of the first people had the same names.

Finally, there have been included a number of myths dealing with the coming to earth of people in ~~regions~~ other localities ~~than Bella Coola~~. It is probable that these are, in origin, the myths of other tribes, more or less assimilated to the Bella Coola ~~type~~ pattern. ~~According to my informants,~~ Each of these ~~myths~~ was said to have been obtained ~~came to Bella Coola~~ by the marriage of one of the descendants of ~~these~~ people described therein with a Bella Coola man or woman.

No further explanation is needed for the following myths which are arranged, as far as possible, according to the list already given of Bella Coola towns.

(1) Page 61.

BELLA COOLA ORIGIN MYTHS.

Origin Myth of Älpälïat. (1)

(1). Related by Mrs. Waller.

In the beginning of time, Alquntam, in his form of S nx, the Sun, sent down a man, Yuyulk^{w}mai to Mt. Nus matlaix,(1) a mountain on the north side of the Bella Coola River about two miles from the sea, near the upper end of the Indian reserve. With him came Xwonxwon m, the Hummingbird, and Qwax, the Raven. The former flew ahead to clear a path down the mountain slope for Yuyulk^{w}mai. At that time there was no sun, everything was dark, drear and bleak. As they were descending the mountain, they remembered that they had forgotten to bring from above the sticks for making fire which S nx had promised them. To remedy the oversight, Raven assumed the form of a deer, returned to the upper regions and collected the desired appliances, then rejoined his companions below. S nx had given Yuyulk^{w}mai a stone hammer to use in making a slamon weir, so he chose a site near the river, where the village of Alqalaxl now stands, and built a house of evergreen boughs. The perpetual gloom annoyed Raven so that he determined to release light, sxem, which he knew was in a container in the house above. Once again he ascended and succeeded in uncovering the light of the sun which has since shone forth on this world. From this Raven took for himself the name, Qunqw n m ul i a sxem.

When Yuyulk^{w}mai awoke after the first night in his new house, he found a salmon-weir ready for him, built by S nx while the man was sleeping. That night he slept again, but nothing had altered in the morning.

During the day, S nx appeared to Yuyulk^{w}mai, saying:

"I bring you the name, S nxalotla. When you give a potlatch, carve my face on your totem-pole."

The next day S nx came again.

"I bring you the name, S nxhakila," he said. "When you give a potlatch, carve my face on the bench where the chiefs sit."

The third day S nx appeared once more, saying:

"I bring you the name, Anuxemlaix. When you give a potlatch, paint my face on the back wall of your house."

Next day S nx appeared in the form of a stump with numerous radiating roots, scoured and polished by the river.

(1). This mountain is also called Alquntamaak s, Sq ts lx, and Alkik mlak n.

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mer used in the construction of salmon weirs), you will know that other people are living above you on the river. Put abelone shell on the hammer."

With these instructions S nx went away nd never came back.

In course of time the population of the earth increased. Tuyuhkmai had become rich and he invited the people for a ɬ m. The name he used on this occasion was S nxalotła and he carved the face of S nx on his totem-pole, as he had been instructed to do. A few years later he gave another ɬ m, with the nameS nxhakila, and this time he carved S nx's face on the bench where the statalt mx sat. When he gave his third ɬ m it was in right of the name Anuxenlaix, and he had S nx's face painted on the back wall of his house. Tuyuhkmai's fourth and last ɬ m was given in the name of Alqexqi djut. This time he erected as a totem-pole a bare stick, presumably in reference to the appearance of S nx as a tree-trunk.

The names which occur in this smaiusta are still in use.

1. Other names for this mountain are, Alquntamaak s, Squte ^{ɬx}, and Adkik nłak n.
2. Meaning, "A glance towawards". It is the word used when a person looks downwards between his legs, or over his shoulders, a reference to the manner in which S nx, from aloft, watches the actions of mortals.

MW 2079 A smaiusta.

When Yuyuƛkmai (see page 837) came to Mt. Nus matƛlaix he was not alone. With him were his old father, Teilmutƛ, his younger brother, iqom notƛ, and a still younger sister, Kimiƛkan. These three went away at once to the Skeena River taking with them some of the large cone-shaped whistles which they had brought with them as a present from the supreme god. The people living on the Skeena desired these whistles so much that they quarrelled and fought for them, so disgusting Teilmutƛ and Kimiƛkan that they determined to return. But Teilmutƛ was too old to travel. His daughter had a copper cute which she thrust her ancient father, and then placed it firmly against the under side of a rock which was suspended without visible support a few feet above the ground. Teilmutƛ was wedged between rock and copper, and there he died. Kimiƛkan retraced her steps back to Bella Coola, to the summit of Mt. Nus matƛlaix, from where she took flight back to the land above.

Meanwhile iqom notƛ was prospering. He lived in a copper shelter on the shore of a river with a copper raven, Snuqwaxwals, perched on the roof of his house where it could peer over the edge down into the river beneath to see the salmon, Snus mkals, and the salmon, Snus mƛkank . iqom notƛ was able to give a me at which he made for himself the names Ao sti, and the s sack name, Lalisax. One of the songs which he used was composed as if it were sung by the copper itself, while the themes of others were of Snuqwaxwals, Snus mkals, and Snus mƛkank.

At last iqom notƛ became weary of the Skeena and determined to visit Yuyuƛkmai. Travelling in a copper canoe he soon reached the mouth of the Pe al where he found no one. From this experience he create' for himself the name, U skaxus, which means, "There is nothing." iqom notƛ proceeded on foot to S nxƛ where he met Yuyuƛkmai to whom he told his adventures.

MW 2075 A smaiusta.

In the beginning there came down to the western slope of Mt. XXXXXXXX Nus matłlaix three brothers, whose names, in relative order of their ages, were Stalt mx, qyuyuyut, and Nusxem a. Descending the mountain they settled at Ał atł. There was a spring inside their house, near the back wall, and from spring water (xw n tł) the brothers took for themselves the name Smxwnułals.

After they had been living on this earth for some time Stalt mx married Skqalutł (see page 839). They had a daughter xxxxxxxxxxxxx t whom they gave the name, Nusxemtaian a. The baby grew into girlhood very rapidly and soon reached the age of puberty. Now at this time there was no sun, it was hidden in a container hanging from the roof of Stalt mx's house. Qwax determined to obtain this for the use of mortalsx and decided to become Nusxemtaian a's child with this aim in view. First he changed himself into a tiny fragment of hemlock needle and placed himself in the cup from which she was drinking. XX But the girl blew away the fragment of leaf, though she had no idea that it was Qwax. Again he tried by changing himself to a piece of eagle down, but again she skimmed it from the surface of the water. The third time carelessly Qwax became mud. Nusxemtaian a drank this with the water, xxxxxx and was both startled and perturbed to find herself pregnant. Qwax had entered her womb.

One day Nusxemtaian a saw a very old man sitting by the side of a pool. He had spots of red paint on his face and appeared to be very poor. The xxxxxxx man's name was Kamałqwax. The girl told her fa her whom she had seen and Stalt mx upbraided her for not inviting him to come to their house.

In course of time Nusxemtaian a gave birth to a baby boy who was, of course, Qwax He grew rapidly until within a few weeks he had become ax naughty little boy, always demanding new toys, and always crying if he could not get them. One day he saw the sun hanging near the roof. At once he began to cry for the shining thing and continued until Stalt mx yielded to his grandson's tears and gave it to him to play with. Qwax

played with it on the floor for a short time, then opened the door and dashed out, As he did so he shattered the container which held light. It became the sun, which has since remained shining. Qwax once more assumed his Raven form and flew away.

According to another informant the first settler at Älvälärd was Xemxemtnem who brought with him a moose hide and a model of Nusmät'a. He set up this house and it xxxxxed expanded or contracted according to his wish.

Among the first peopleto be sent down to this earth was Q̓eit̓. For some time he lived on the north side of the Bella Coola River near its mouth, then with his sister Ä̓nusyɛ̓laix and a herald he moved across to a mountain on the south shore of the river. He had a daughter who married a son of Kemxemtnɛ̓m, living on the north side of the river. Q̓eit̓'s daughter had a child to whom he gave the name Nɔamtäxaik.

About this time Älkwi, a Snutl tl chief, lost Alqtcälɔs, a stake decorated with abalone shells which he used for his salmon trap. It floated down into Q̓eit̓'s country where Ä̓nusyɛ̓laix saw it, and advised his brother to take possession of it. Q̓eit̓ did so gladly because of its beautiful decoration, without knowing what it was or whence it came. He took it home ~~were~~ and he displayed it to many of his neighbours, but no one could tell him what it was. In honour of this event Q̓eit̓ gave the name Alqtcälɔs to his son and the name has since been handed down in his family. Älkwi followed down stream after his stake but failed to overtake it before Q̓eit̓ obtained it; so it was never returned to its original owner.

Fragment of a Q̀omqo'ts Origin Myth

In the beginning the supreme god, Atqunläm, sent down from Nusmït'a to this earth all peoples, not only Bella Coola, but Fort Rupert Indians, Carriers and the rest. To Mt. Nusläx(m, on the south side of the Bella Coola River, about one and a half miles from the sea, he sent four brothers; the eldest Xemsaix or Laqwomais; the second, whose name is unknown; the third, (x)lq̀oplam; and the youngest, (x'w(naisa. They came in the form of some animal. With them they brought a miniature weir, which they set up in the river near where they had settled. (x'w(naisa had brought with him the prerogative of punishing anyone who dared to violate any of the taboos connected with the river. (1) The four brothers lived for some time at the base of the mountain then jealousy arose among them and the eldest moved to Q̀omqo'ts. He caught innumerable salmon in the river at that place so that he was soon able to give them to people all over the world. It seemed as if the world was tilted so that all the wealth flowed in upon him; accordingly he took for himself the name Siälaelä which has this significance. Since he was the eldest and chief of the four brothers the name has been always considered the most exalted in Q̀omqo'ts.

(1) See page

Origin Myth of Snuʔʌ́li.

In the beginning of time Älquntäm created the forefatners of all mankind in his house above. Then asked each in what form he wished to go to earth. A number of bird and animal cloaks were hanging on the walls of the house, and each man was invited to take his choice. One ~~man~~ whose name was Käliäkʌs chose the raven. When he had donned the garment he became a raven. Slowly he circled down from above in long spirals, carrying with him his two younger brothers and a sister, ~~all~~ in ~~the~~ raven form, as a bird carries its young. He set down the two small ~~brothers~~ brothers on the top of a flat mountain near Snuʔʌ́li where he told them to remain, saying:

"I am going to the east ~~and shall~~ but will return."

He brought back some abalone shells, which he set down near the diminutive ravens, saying:

"Stay here, I am going to the west ~~and shall~~ but will return.

This time he brought back ~~xxxx~~ with him some copper, that flashed in the sun.

Käliäkʌs and his two brothers now assumed human form and sent their raven cloaks floating back to the land above. This was what happened to all the bird and animal forms used by the first people. Then ~~they~~ descended the mountain and built their house by the Bella Coola River at the spot now known as Snuʔʌ́li. Käliäkʌs had brought with him a mountain goat, which bred with great rapidity so that these first Snuʔʌ́li people subsisted largely on goat flesh, ~~This was~~ the provision made for them by Älquntäm. In some inexplicable manner it appears that ~~it is~~ that the supernatural hunter, Twalätlit, whose other name is Lälemkila, "The one who throws down(goats)", had come with ~~them~~ this group. Käliäkʌs had such success in hunting that he was able to give valuable presents of goat meat, goat grease and woolen blankets. At ~~this~~ potlatch he took for himself the name, Läliänʌimut, "The Copper One", because when returning from the west the raven had covered himself with copper, so that it appeared as if he were made of it.

This name has since been use by the descendants of Wliäkɛs.

Second Origin Myth of Snut'li.

Long, long ago, there were no people on this earth; they were all in Nusmät'a where different languages were made. Then Älquntäm gave life to the people in his house and sent them down to earth. Five brothers swarmed down / Nultɛnikta, a post that stretched from the land above to this world. Their names were Xɛmcua, Yuyulkʷmai, Pɛnx̣kɛla, Waäkɛs, and Noäkila. Pɛnx̣kɛla, who was in part an eagle, brought with him an olachen and a hammer for driving stakes used for olachen nets. Xemcua and Yuyulkʷmai brought a painted seat which they used at ceremonial gatherings. About the same time four sisters came to earth from Naos, far to the east. Pɛnx̣kɛla exerted his power of thought to make them come to Bella Coola. Their names were Wiakai, who was without legs, Tsumtlakɛs; Skɛmots̓x̣mänʻa; and Nuskwalsɛkända. The four women set out for the west and at Smaiɛnʻa, the source of the Bella Coola River Wiakai scraped the ground with what served her as a foot, and the Bella Coola River began to flow. Skɛmots̓x̣-mänʻa put her hands over her head and began to rock to and fro in woe at seeing the water, hence her name; and Tsumtlakɛs sucked up much of the water, but a gentle stream continued to flow and they followed it to the west, until Nusqalst heard an echo. Meanwhile Xemcua had come from his mountain at Tɛmotᵗ, and though Yuyulkʷmai had gone to Sɛnxɛ they continued their joint ownership of the highly prized paint which was bubbling from the ground like a spring. Pɛnx̣kɛla went westward looking for a suitable place to settle, carrying with him his olachen and his hammer. At Mesatche Nose, the point between North Bentinck Arm and Labouchere Channel, a house rose from the water beneath him. It was the house of ʼOmoqwa, ~~the~~ chief of the sea creatures, within which the walls ~~are~~ were painted by the rising and falling of the tides. This house appeared, moved slightly, and subsided, whereby Pɛnx̣kɛla became a shaman. He continued his journey, stopping at ʼQwaox, Tälʻio, and Nuʼkʷ Rivers, at the last of which he met a chief A'yaoʼ, and his herald, Känɛxia. ~~He~~ Here he threw his olachen into the water and it multiplied past all count in order to serve as his food. Pɛnx̣kɛla

ascended a small river at this point and after various travels reached Snut'li where the rest of his party had remained. Here he built a fish dam in which very many salmon were caught. He built a house fashioned on the plan of that which house that had risen from the water. It fell several times but he always rebuilt it. Four of the brothers married the four sisters.

The above myth probably contains many inaccuracies; it was collected with difficulty from a feeble old man. No explanation could be obtained of the relationship, if any, of this group to Kăliăkas and his people. Theoretically, each was the only inhabitant of Snut'li.

Another informant stated that Panăkăla settled at Tcămotă where he used his hammer to construct a salmon-weir.

SA 2199

A smaiusta.

Before this earth was populated Alquntam created all the birds and the animals in his house up above. He gave to each its form and its voice. Only Qwax,the Raven, was dissatisfied and constantly rubbed off his coat of paint in hope th t he would be repainted even more beautifully, because at that time Qwax had a variagted plumage. When everything was ready Alquntam sent his house and all that it contained down to Snut li under the guidance of a man like that of the supreme god, Al to whom Alquntam had given his own name and his own power. The human Alquntam tried to paint Qwax, without being able to please the petulant fellow, until, becoming disgusted, he painted him uniform black which Qwax could not remove. Now at last everything was ready and w en Alquntam opened the door out rushed the animals and birds. In the press the Qao lt ks, the Duck, who has a woman had had a seat on the left of the fire facing inwards, was stepped upon, that is why to this day this duck can only waddle awkwardly. Her neighbour, Sqwulat n, another duck whose place was opposite Qao lt ks, was not injured, in consequence she can walk comfortably. Among the animals released was Sxwapanitl, the Deer, who at that time was without antlers. He rushed down the river and seized some beech sticks whish he thrust onto his head where they grew becoming antlers. At this time there was no fire in the world but Sxwapanitl determined to obtain some from the house of Alquntam above: with this aim in view he returned aloft and began to dance. Alquntam, not recognising the disguised Sxwapanitl watched the performer with interest, when suddenly the crafty one thrust his head down into the fire transfixing some of the flaming sticks on his antlers and rushed away with Alqunatm in fruitless pursuit. This is how fire was brought to this world.

In course of time Alquntam amassed enough goods to give a l m, takin for himself the same Alquntamaak s, as the supreme god had decreed. When the guests had assembled Sxwapanitl danced, but in his wild gyrations he kicked some of the visitors, wounding them. The irate Alquntamaak s chased him out of the house and told him never to return.

The guests then gave presents to Alquntamaak s, to his alk^{w}, and to those who had been injured by Sxwa'anitl. Whether this was done as a mere mark of good-will, or whether it was to shame the host because his performer had maltreated the guests, is open to question, but at any rate the practice became customary and has since been carried out a l ms. Such a presentation by the guests is called nutslexw m. Whenever the owner of the name Alquntamaak s gives a l m he erects a house similar to that brought down by his first ancestor with a Raven as totme-pole. Belonging to the smaiusta is the nusqwal name, Taliokan a.

The guests then gave presents to Ałquntämaäk<s, to his ~~a~~ herald, and to those who had been injured by ~~Sxwapäniti~~ Deer. Whether this was done merely as a ~~more~~ mark of good-will, or whether it was to shame the host because his performer had maltreated the guests, is open to question, but at any rate the practice became customary and has since been carried out at potlatches.

* * *

Whenever the owner of the name Ałquntämaäk<s gives a potlatch he erects a house similar to that brought down by his first ancestor with a Raven as totem-pole. Belonging to this origin myth is the nusqwäl name, Taliokän·a.

Origin Myth of Nusq̓alst.

In the beginning of time there came down from Nusmät'a to Nusq̓alst a man whose name was Kämälsonx̂^{w}'. As a present from Älquntäm he had brought with him a model of Nusmät'a, which he set up on this earth and to which he ~~likewise~~ gave the name Nusmät'a. The Bella Coola have a tradition that the first sonx̂^{w}', heaven, fell and that it was from this catastrophe that Kämälsonx̂^{w}' derived his name. (1)

Kämälsonx̂^{w}' had seen at the zenith of Nusmät'a the face of a grizzly bear and in consequence he used a design of this animal for all his decorations His blankets, food boxes, spoons, all were decorated with grizzly bears. The door of his house, Nusmät'a, was the mouth of a grizzly bear which opened its mouth to admit one, and closed its mouth behind the guest. The house lengthened of its own accord whenever Kämälsonx̂^{w}' gave apotlatch. It endured for generations, so that the father of my informant, a woman of about fifty, had seen its rotten posts when a young man. Before the door there lay on his back a man, so'oksta, with a huge stomach on which anyone entering the house had to step; a slave or commoner did so without resultant noise, but when a mighty chief trod on so'oksta his weight drew forth a grunt from the recumbant man. An important chief is always said to be "heavy", by virtue of the goods he has given away and this expresses graphically the style of thought. Any chief entering gave to Kämälsonx̂^{w}' a slave, a canoe, or a copper, "to open the door", a reference to the mouth-door of the grizzly bear which was supposed to snap shut and kill a person who did not do so.

Kämälsonx̂^{w}' was so powerful that he could give many potlatches. In such cases he began his preparations early in the spring for the following winter. First he drew his canoe up on the beach before his house and smeared its bow, which was fashioned into the nose of a grizzly bear, with urine and beat it with evergreen boughs. This was a signal that he proposed to go on a raiding expedition, and his fellow villagers were always glad to follow him. His raiding expeditons were always successful because, not only was he a powerful

(1) See page

man, ~~but also~~ he took due care when nearing his destination to send forward a scouting party to determine the number of hostile houses and decide on the number of attackers which should be allotted to deal with each. On one occasion he attacked the Fort Rupert people and captured a woman of chief's rank, who begged him not to enslave her, promising him her name, Wikwan·ɛ́kwɬa or Ḱwɬa. He agreed to her request and she tied a long halibut line around her neck and told the other women to grasp it. Those who did so were spared. In the same attack Kämälsonx̱wʻ made use of a Fort Rupert slave whom he bribed to act as guide against his masters. The slave led the party ~~in~~ under cover of a fog which lifted at an inopportune moment, but the slave deceived the Fort Rupert Indians into believing that the party was not hostile. Kämälsonx̱wʻ rewarded the slave with the gift of a marten skin coat and one of marmot skins.

When he gave a potlatch Kämälsonx̱wʻ had the back wall of his house decorated with pictures of sun and moon, while he himself wore a grizzly bear skin with the head of the bear above his own. As he danced there rose through the floor a large box on which was painted a raven. Kämälsonx̱wʻ went to the box and took from it sufficient presents to supply the requirements of one of his parties of guests, the Bella Bella, for example. Then the box would sink from sight, only to reappear with the gifts for another of the parties of his guests, and the same for as many times as there were parties of guests from outside places. This was the method of procedure decreed by Älquntäm.

These first Nusq̓alst people made a number of special objects for their potlatches. As a representation of the five peaked mountain beneath which they lived, they erected five peaks over the front of their house, a custom which has been carried out until the present day. Projecting from one of the peaks was the figure of a mountain goat, since that animal was brought to earth to serve as food by their first ancestors. They also made a number of large stone spoons which after being used for many generations, were buried with a certain Potɬɛs about fifty years ago. These utensils were of a type used by Nusq̓alst before he became a mountain, and were later copied by the carpenter-masons.

Kämälsonxʷᶜ was so powerful that he changed part of the ceremonial into a kusiut rite, creating Nusmät'a as his kusiut name, and decreeing that his nuskäsiusta[1] should be the spot on which his house stood. For this kusiut ceremonial he always used a ye<x[2] with the voice of a raven.

Origin Myth of Nusq'alst. (Second version dealing with another settlement.)

Nusq'alst is a chief among mountains. Like a human chief it had several names, Tcäkwaäk'as, Sänutlq'm , and others; these names belong to several persons now living. Like a person, too, the mountain was sent down from above at the beginning of the world to Tcawat on the mainland opposite the northern end of Vancouver Island, ~~from where~~ whence, it moved to its present position midway up the Bella Coola valley which the mountain had heard was a pleasant place.

Many people landed on this mountain from on high, among others the chief Nusmät'a or Qoqmai; he had two names. He ~~had~~ brought with him from above a ~~h~~ house, ~~named~~ called Kämälsonxʷᶜ, which when set up on this earth became large, so ~~l~~ large that all the owner's family and descendants could live within. Outside the door of the house Nusmat a had a totem-pole, Nutl'oqeq', erected. Inside there dwelt Echo, who was very clever at learning any language, and ~~who~~ was always a incessant talker, ~~whose~~ His rolling voice reverberated not only through the house but through out the whole countryside. When Echo summoned people for a dance he used the word Nusnuslika. When a descendant of Nusmät'a gives a potlatch he makes a mask with an ever-changing mouth to represent Echo.

Not long after the completion of the house and totem-pole Nusmät'a set out one evening to fish for salmon with the aid of torches; he took with him his infant son and several followers. During their absence a snow-slide descended and blotted out the town, killing all the inhabitants except one slave who concealed himself within the hollow totem-pole. The slide was due to the mountain being angry at the erection of a totem-pole carved to represent him as he was before he changed to mountain form. When the survivors

(1) See page
(2) see p.

returned to their buried village they at once set about rebuilding it, and in ~~t~~ time it again became prosperous as the people increased in numbers in the world. They built a fish dam to supply their wants, using tools ~~fashioned from~~ stone obtained from Mt. Nusq̓alst. Älkwi, the son of a Stuɬx chief married Nusmät'a's daughter Skɑmnuɬänˀa, and Nusmät'a moved to Q̓omqo'ts.

Other informants provided a little further information about Nusq̓alst. While still in human form, he wore a ~~kɑɑ~~ flat-topped hat with broad brim around which ran two snakes. After he had been changed to stone as a mountain, several individuals looked down on him from above and chose his slopes as landing-place, thus making him their k̓waɬtɑnta. The first to do so is said to have been a man named Oq̓smai.